



State Rep. Chris England, chairman of the Alabama Democratic Party, criticized Alabama's "broken" criminal justice system on Sunday.

**By Connor Sheets | [csheets@al.com](mailto:csheets@al.com)**

State Rep. Chris England, chairman of the Alabama Democratic Party, spoke out about Alabama's "broken" criminal justice system on Sunday, tweeting that it will take "more than new buildings to fix it."

In a long Twitter thread, England called for Alabama Department of Corrections Commissioner Jeff Dunn to be fired, citing reports that 10 men have died in the state's prisons this month.

"Under Dunn, mismanagement, lack of transparency, violence, corruption and death happen so often that it is has become normalized," England tweeted. "For a system

7/25/2021, 7:24 PM

that the DOJ believes is worse than the death penalty, his continued employment is direct evidence that Alabama just doesn't care.

**Chris England** @RepEngland70 · Jul 25, 2021

Replying to @RepEngland70

Let's start with the obvious. ADOC Commissioner Jeff Dunn needs to be fired. 10 men have died in prison THIS MONTH. Well, 10 that we know about. Not only, is the ADOC poorly managed, they routinely hide information so it's hard to know what's going on.

At least 10 incarcerated men have died in Alabama prisons this month

Two deaths this week inside Alabama prisons bring the month's ...  
alreporter.com

**Chris England**  
@RepEngland70

Under Dunn, mismanagement, lack of transparency, violence, corruption and death happen so often that it is has become normalized. For a system that the DOJ

Tweet your reply

His statements comes as Gov. Kay Ivey, Dunn and other state leaders continue to insist that the construction of expensive new correctional facilities is necessary to reduce overcrowding, widespread violence against inmates and correctional officers, and other longstanding issues in Alabama's prisons.

The DOC did not immediately respond to a request for comment Sunday.

"What will it take for us to realize that Alabama's criminal justice system is broken and it is going to take more than new buildings to fix it?" England tweeted Sunday afternoon. "We got federal lawsuits, corruption in [the Alabama Department of Corrections], people dying daily in our prisons and a pardons and paroles system that doesn't work."

**Chris England**

@RepEngland70

What will it take for us to realize that Alabama's criminal justice system is broken and it is going to take more than new buildings to fix it? We got federal lawsuits, corruption in ADOC, people dying daily in our prisons and a pardons and paroles system that doesn't work.

12:39 PM · Jul 25, 2021

161

9

Copy link to Tweet

Tweet your reply

The strongly worded statements by one of Alabama's most influential Democratic leaders gives voice to criticism by many advocates, lawyers and experts who argue that new prisons won't fix endemic problems that have plagued Alabama's state prison system for years.

In April and May, three underwriters backed out of Ivey's proposed plan to have private companies build three massive prisons in Alabama and charge the state millions in annual rent to house prisoners in them. Ivey said the plan was no longer on the table after a key deadline to close on the deal passed in June. The ADOC is being sued by the DOJ for fostering an unconstitutional environment of brutal

Violence & mistreatment in its prisons.

years alleging that the department has provided inadequate mental health treatment and medical care, among other shortfalls.

England also called for the removal of Leigh Gwathney, chair of the Alabama Bureau of Pardons and Paroles.

**Chris England** @RepEngland70 · Jul 25, 2021

Replying to @RepEngland70

Knowing what we know about our Department of Corrections, do we really want to give Dunn billions of dollars to build and manage new facilities? Any plans for reform of the system have to start with him being relieved of duty. New prisons won't fix a leadership problem.

**Chris England**

@RepEngland70

You know what else new prisons won't fix? Our broken pardons and paroles system. Leigh Gwathney, the chair of the board, is just as much of a problem as Jeff Dunn is. Unfortunately the only way to relieve her of duty is through impeachment. For this system to work she must go.

12:39 PM · Jul 25, 2021

24

1

Copy link to Tweet

Tweet your reply

The bureau, which did not immediately respond to a request for comment Sunday, announced last month that it would re-open pardon and parole hearings to the public after halting all hearings for two months beginning in March and holding closed hearings through June.

Advocates and experts have criticized the bureau for closing the hearings and granting the release of fewer people during the pandemic than in previous years, despite the risk COVID poses to people incarcerated in overcrowded prisons.